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# PIONEER RECOLLECTIONS OF BELOIT AND SOUTHERN WISCONSIN<sup>1</sup>

BY LUCIUS G. FISHER

EDITED BY MILO M. QUAIFE

The first of January, 1837, I arranged with the Fairbanks to leave them and locate in either Louisville or St. Louis, and sell their scales and other goods manufactured by them at Pittsburgh, on commission. I returned to Derby and remained there until May, visiting my sister Emeline then teaching in Montreal. I left Derby the fifteenth of May for the South, leaving a few hundred dollars with the Fairbanks and taking some thousands in notes belonging to them to collect between

<sup>1</sup> Lucius G. Fisher, a native of Vermont, was born at Derby, August 17, 1808. His father was a substantial farmer of Derby, but due to business reverses the son failed to obtain the anticipated college education, a fact which he never ceased to lament. While still a youth he formed the design of migrating to the West, but the execution of this project was delayed for several years, first by reason of his disinclination to separate from his mother, and after her death by the necessity of assisting in the support of his father and sisters. After several years of school teaching and two years of service as sheriff's deputy, Fisher in 1834 entered the employ of the Messrs. Fairbanks, of St. Johnsbury, Vermont, to travel for them and introduce their "recently invented" platform scales. The immediate inducement to this employment was the proffered salary of \$500 yearly and all expenses; but the work was accepted by Fisher, as he reports in later life, in order to find, in his travels, "that better country" he had determined, when but sixteen years of age, to seek.

The employment with the Fairbanks company continued profitably for Fisher for three years. Then the panic of 1837 brought it to a disastrous termination, under the circumstances set forth in the narrative which follows. The manuscript from which these facts are drawn, and the greater portion of which we print, tells the story of the writer's life from birth until the time of writing, at Chicago, in the spring of 1883. To summarize its concluding portion, Fisher left Beloit for Chicago in 1866, where with Ralph Emerson he built a block at the southeast corner of State and Washington streets on the site of the present Columbus Memorial Building. Although burned out in the great fire of October 9, 1871, Fisher prospered in Chicago and became comparatively wealthy.

The manuscript narrative of his career was presented to the State Historical Society of Wisconsin in January, 1917 by a grandson, William Scott Bond, of Chicago. Because of the valuable picture it presents of pioneer days in Wisconsin, and particularly of the early development of Beloit, in which Mr. Fisher played a prominent and creditable part, the narrative seems eminently worthy of the wider publicity and service which its publication in the *WISCONSIN MAGAZINE OF HISTORY* involves. In preparing the manuscript for publication a uniform typographical style has been imposed, and certain minor lapses in composition have been eliminated; but these editorial changes affect in no degree the character of the narrative as it left Mr. Fisher's hand.

Burlington, Vermont, and Buffalo, New York, and from which collections when made I was to take the money due me and remit to them the balance. I left with my father a fine span of horses, harness, and wagon with which to follow me with my sisters when I should get a home for them. My sister Rosetta had been lame for a year and was under the care of a physician and surgeon. I left home and friends with a sad heart, taking the stage for Burlington, my two most intimate friends riding the first mile with me. One was Stoddart B. Colby, who was afterwards the leading lawyer of Vermont and who died Register of the United States currency and whose wife was burned on the *Swallow* in the Hudson River; the other, Timothy P. Redfield, now one of the judges of the supreme court of Vermont and brother of my other very dear and most intimate friend, Fletcher Redfield, for many years Chief Justice of Vermont. I have never met either of them since. I had to get out of the stage the first day to steady it over snow drifts.

I reached Troy, New York, the third day and that evening the news came there that the banks had suspended specie payment in consequence of General Jackson's order to the United States treasurer to remove the United States deposits from the United States Bank to the Sub-Treasury. All banks suspended specie redemption and for the time no paper money was current or debts paid. All confidence was destroyed between business men, and such a financial panic was never seen before or since in our country. When I reached Buffalo I had not collected a cent from \$27,000 in notes against the best business men on the line of the Erie Canal. In Buffalo I collected in bank bills \$70. Here I was with but little money and all business prostrated. I could not see in prospect a time when I could hope to engage in the commission business with success. I had nothing in Vermont to return to. I was lonely and desolate. Young men were being

discharged from stores and factories in great numbers, and business men were failing everywhere.

I met at Buffalo a discharged clerk from a house in New York who was a native of Vermont, and was seeking employment. Neither of us knew what to do or where to go. We had been living at the Mansion House several days and on one Sunday morning we walked down to the wharf and saw a schooner there with her captain on her deck. I asked him if he was the captain and where he was bound. He said he was the captain, that he was bound to Chicago, that his schooner was a new one, etc. I asked the price of fare in cabin with board to Chicago. He replied \$20. I turned to my friend Whitcombe and said, "Let us go to Chicago; we may as well go to one place as another." He replied, "I will go with you." I asked the captain when he sailed. He said, "At nine o'clock tomorrow A. M. if the wind is fair." I said, "Book us as passengers and we will be on board in season." We sailed June second. No steamboats had sailed for the upper lakes then, nor until some days later. There was no railroad west of Syracuse. The harbor was full of ice. Before leaving Buffalo, I arranged with a merchant who knew me and who was from Vermont (the father of Frank Fenton of Beloit) to furnish me with provisions if on my arrival at Chicago I should find any sale for them. We were four weeks and two days on the lakes, with head winds and rough weather most of the time. Captain Clement was a very agreeable gentleman, young like his passengers, and very social. Our voyage was so much enjoyed by me as to have left the most pleasant memories of it, although it was an aimless one. We were drifting into the dark future without any plans, yet we were happy, full of life, had that self-reliance on our own strength and mental endowments that took away all anxiety for the future, and enabled us to enjoy the present. The feeling was a desperate, devil-may-care one. As I look back upon the first year of my western life, I wonder that I did not

become a reckless and ruined man. Captain Clement was, after this trip, a large owner of steamboats on the lakes, some of which he commanded; and for several years he has been the treasurer of the North Chicago Rolling Mills and a large stockholder. He landed us in Chicago the night of the third of July, 1837, and we celebrated the Fourth there. Daniel Webster was in Chicago for the first and last time in his life.

A delegation from Milwaukee came to Chicago to invite Webster to visit their city. He had left for the East, and I, finding no encouragement to go into business in Chicago, took passage in an old steamer with this delegation to Milwaukee.

#### WHAT I FOUND IN CHICAGO

In May, 1837, about a month before my arrival, Chicago had elected its first mayor, William B. Ogden. Its population was about 3,000 and was mostly north of the river. There was a Presbyterian church where the Board of Trade stands, in which Rev. Jeremiah Porter preached. The Russell House on the North Side was the grand hotel, built of brick. The Couch brothers had a small hotel on the present site of the Tremont House of the same name, and the City Hotel was built on the corner of State and Lake Streets. There were few buildings south of Lake Street. There was a cornfield running south from Washington Street and east of State Street. Lots were worth from \$100 to \$500 then, but had been worth as many thousands before the panic of 1837. John Wentworth had just started his paper, the *Chicago Democrat*, in a little 7 x 9 wooden building on La Salle Street north of Randolph.<sup>2</sup> I had a letter of introduction to him and there made his acquaintance. The first settler, Gurdon S. Hubbard,<sup>3</sup> was here, William H. Brown, and many other

<sup>2</sup> The *Democrat*, the first newspaper published in Chicago, was founded by John Calhoun in November, 1833. In 1836 Calhoun sold the paper to John Wentworth, who continued as its proprietor and editor until the *Democrat* was merged with the *Tribune* in 1861.

<sup>3</sup> Gurdon S. Hubbard, a native of Vermont, came west in 1818 as a youth in the employ of the American Fur Company, and was assigned to the Illinois

persons with whom I became acquainted, but most of whom have passed away. Some are here yet, and among them G. S. Hubbard & Son, S. B. Cobb, Jerome Beecher, and Mr. Carpenter. Chicago has now a population of 600,000.

I landed in Milwaukee the sixth of July, 1837. The boat could not land and we were sent ashore in the small boat, at the mouth of the river, then at Chase's Point,<sup>4</sup> one mile below the present mouth. My friend, Ed Whitcombe, was yet with me and on the boat I made the acquaintance of John H. Tweedy<sup>5</sup> and formed a friendship which has endured the changes of the last forty-five years. He afterwards married a Fisher from Boston, who descended from the same ancestor that I did. I found Milwaukee with a population of about 1,000, the west side of the river mostly under water, many of the houses built on stilts, abandoned, and doors open, most of the population of 1836 having left the place by reason of the panic. I remember the Frenchman and first settler with a squaw wife was there.<sup>6</sup> I stopped at first at the Milwaukee Hotel, but soon crossed the river to the Leland House where I found my cousin, Dr. L. J. Barber, and remained with him at that house. We had not met since we were lads. We soon became warm friends. I had but little money and several young men boarding at the Leland House had often to borrow of me to pay for their week's washing. All had been

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Brigade. A number of years later he made Chicago his permanent residence and became one of the most prominent of the first generation of Chicago business men. He does not, however, deserve in any sense the title of "first settler" of Chicago.

<sup>4</sup>Chase's Point was named after Horace Chase, a prominent citizen of early Milwaukee. Like the Chicago River, the Milwaukee has been subjected to a civilizing process which has resulted in the acquisition of a new mouth some distance to the north of the natural one.

<sup>5</sup>John H. Tweedy, a native of Connecticut and graduate of Yale, came to Milwaukee in 1836 as a youthful lawyer of twenty-two. He soon became prominent both in legal and in political circles, and throughout the territorial period was one of the leaders of the Whig faction in Wisconsin. In 1847 he was elected as territorial delegate to Congress. Upon the admission of Wisconsin to statehood Tweedy was put forward by the Whigs as their candidate for the governorship, but was defeated by Nelson Dewey. During the fifties Tweedy was active in the development of the railroad system of Wisconsin.

<sup>6</sup>Apparently the reference is to Solomon Juneau, one of the founders of Milwaukee, who settled there as an Indian trader in 1818.

speculating in lots and were broke. None of us knew what to do or where to go.

I remained about a week and decided to cross the country to Galena and go to mining for lead. I started in company with two men, one by the name of Frink and the other Blood. We traveled the first day to Waukesha where was the first house, occupied by a Mr. Pratt.<sup>7</sup> It was small, built of logs, and two berths on one side. The under one was occupied by Pratt and wife, the upper one by Frink and me, and Blood slept on the floor. The next day we lunched at the second house from Milwaukee, at Pewaukee Lake, kept by Harrison Reed,<sup>8</sup> afterwards governor of Florida. We reached Oconomowoc that night, where we found two bachelors in a log shanty with a floor of bark and nothing to eat but dry beans, which they stewed for us and which we ate with a relish from a bark plate with a chip for a knife. The mosquitoes were very large and hungry and feasted upon us that night. We slept but little and left early in the morning on our Indian trail for Rock River, having learned that there was a camp there where we could get food. My feet had become very sore, and the morning's walk of twelve miles in the rain without food, and almost gored to death by the mosquitoes, had so exhausted me that I was sick and could go no farther. Fortunately, at the river I found Charles Goodhue, Esq., and two of his sons from Sherbrooke, Lower Canada, an old acquaintance in the East, who had a fine camp and ten or twelve men and three women in camp. They bade me welcome and gave me to eat and to drink—the best they had and

<sup>7</sup> Alexander Pratt had removed from Milwaukee to Waukesha earlier in the year 1837. Although one of the very early settlers of Waukesha, he was not the first one, nor was his house the only one at the place at the time of Fisher's visit. Pratt was unmarried at this time. He was a man of some means, however, and had in his employ a man and wife. Probably this couple is the one alluded to by Fisher.

<sup>8</sup> Harrison Reed had come west to Milwaukee in 1836, and in 1837 became virtually the first editor of the *Sentinel*. By an unfortunate quarrel a few years later he lost control of the paper and was ruined financially. After residences at Madison and Menasha, Reed in 1862 was appointed tax commissioner of Florida. He later (1868-72) served as governor of the state.

I was never happier than that day. I was soon refreshed and ready to travel again. Mr. Goodhue and sons had commenced building a dam across Rock River, and afterwards a saw mill was built to cut basswood lumber to raft down the river where new settlements were being made.

I remained with Mr. Goodhue and sons a few days and was persuaded by them to visit what was then called New Albany (now Beloit) before going to Galena, they representing it as a very desirable point for a town and offering me an interest in claims which they had recently purchased there. I accepted the proposition to visit Beloit. There was a large encampment of Indians on the opposite side of Rock River from our camp, of whom we purchased a large canoe, giving them \$5 and a gallon of whisky. In it Mr. Goodhue and son George, Mr. Blood, Mr. Frink, and myself embarked for Beloit. Goodhue and I owned the canoe and Frink and Blood worked their passage. The river was very high and we went to Fort Atkinson the first half day and lodged that night with Alvin Foster in a log house, the only house there.<sup>9</sup> It had but one room of moderate size in which were domiciled that night Foster and his wife, mother, and niece, and seven travelers. The next day we reached Koshkonong Lake before 10 A. M., and the wind being high we divided, Messrs. Goodhue, Frink, and Blood going by land around the lake, while George Goodhue and I kept the boat, preferring our chances to drown to the tramp by land of six miles on a hot day over a marsh of some miles. We were to meet at the outlet of the lake. We in the boat had a rough voyage, bailing water part of the way to prevent foundering, and on our

<sup>9</sup> The settlement of Fort Atkinson was begun in the autumn of 1836 under the auspices of the Rock River Claim Company. This company, organized earlier in the same year, had sent out an exploring party and made claims at several points, including Fort Atkinson. In order to make good the latter claim it was decided to locate a family on it, and accordingly a house was built and occupied by Dwight Foster and family, late in 1836. During the ensuing winter, Edward and Alvin Foster also came to Fort Atkinson, their houses being built about a mile up the river from Dwight Foster's cabin. Instead of being the first house at this point, therefore, Alvin Foster's was the second or third one built.

arrival at the outlet found none of our party and after waiting some hours we went on and just after dark we met them on the river bank about ten miles below the lake, muddy and tired. We took them [in] and soon reached Janesville, a village of three families, viz., Messrs. Bailey, Stevens, and Janes.<sup>10</sup> We remained there over night and next morning by 10 A. M. reached Beloit, where there was one family.

It was Sunday morning, the fifteenth of July, 1837. I found Caleb Blodgett<sup>11</sup> and family there in a log house and we slept upon the floor two nights while there, in the only house except a log hut which had just been vacated by an Indian trader, by name Thibault, whose wife was a squaw. The first day, Sunday, I took a walk up where the College now stands and on to the banks of Turtle Creek where I saw many Indian mounds, some of them still preserved and where I had an uninterrupted view of prairie such as I had never had before. I said to my friend with me that it was the most beautiful landscape view that I had ever seen. Quite a number of Indian wigwams were standing upon the prairie near the creek and hurdles for drying their corn, which had been raised for years upon the Turtle bottoms.

<sup>10</sup> The settlement of Janesville was begun by the erection of a log house by John Inman and others near the close of the year 1835. Two or three months later Henry Janes, for whom the town is named, staked out a claim here, and in the spring of 1836 brought his family to a cabin which workmen had already built for him. Several other families came during the following months, and Fisher is probably incorrect in saying there were but three at the time of his first visit in the autumn of 1837. The Bailey family, mentioned by Fisher, arrived in the autumn of 1836, and the Stevens family in the spring of 1837.

<sup>11</sup> Blodgett, a native of Vermont, had come west in search of a fortune, and in the spring of 1836 had bought Thibault's squatter-right claim to all the land within "three looks" of his cabin for \$200. Blodgett thereupon set up a claim to some ten sections of land, and fortified it, according to local histories, by building a log house and ploughing a furrow around it. Before becoming possessed of any legal title whatever, Blodgett began disposing of his extensive domain by selling to Goodhue his claim to one-third of it (one-fourth, according to Fisher) for the sum of \$2,000. Goodhue in turn disposed of one-fourth of his interest to Fisher for \$400. Meanwhile, in March, 1837, Dr. Horace White of Colebrook, N. H., had visited the place, and on behalf of the New England Emigrating Company had purchased one-third of Blodgett's claim for \$2,500. This coming of the New England Emigrating Company to Beloit may be regarded as the most important event in connection with its early development. At the same time Doctor White was instrumental in giving to Beloit her most famous citizen in the person of his three-year old son, Horace.

Beloit had been named by Blodgett "New Albany." He with a large family of sons had located there in 1836 and built their house that fall and had claimed some three miles square by ploughing a furrow around and putting up several shanties. The Government was surveying the land; and as it was not in the market, no title could be obtained except a so-called squatter's title, which was obtained by a settlement upon the land and which gave the settler the right to preëempt 160 acres when it came into market. In February, 1837, Dr. Horace White visited Beloit as the agent of a New England company from Colebrook, New Hampshire, that had sent him out to select a home for them in the new West. He left Colebrook in January in company with R. P. Crane and O. P. Bicknell, who stopped in Michigan while White continued west exploring the Rock River valley and the valley of the Des Moines River, all then in the territory of Wisconsin. At Beloit he found Blodgett and sons (six of them) and John Hackett, a son-in-law, and being pleased with the place, he purchased one-third of all the interest or claims of Blodgett and sons, the interests being undivided. Blodgett had before bought Thibault's interest for \$500, who with his squaw removed to Koshkonong Lake, where I saw them both on my first voyage down the river and on a subsequent one in September. The following winter he was murdered by his squaw and her family.

The following are the names of the colony for whom White acted: Horace White, Otis Bicknell, George W. and Charles Bicknell, their father, Captain Bicknell, R. P. Crane, Messrs. Beach, Eames, and Alfred Field, and Israel Cheney, and one other whose name I forget, but who never came west.<sup>12</sup> In March, White returned east and O. P. Bicknell

<sup>12</sup> The list of members according to Horace White included the following persons: Cyrus Eames, O. P. Bicknell, John W. Bicknell, Asahel B. Howe, Leonard Hatch, David J. Bundy, Ira Young, L. C. Beech, S. G. Colley, G. W. Bicknell, R. P. Crane, Horace Hobart, Horace White, and Alfred Field. William F. Brown, *History of Rock County* (Chicago, 1908), I, 133.

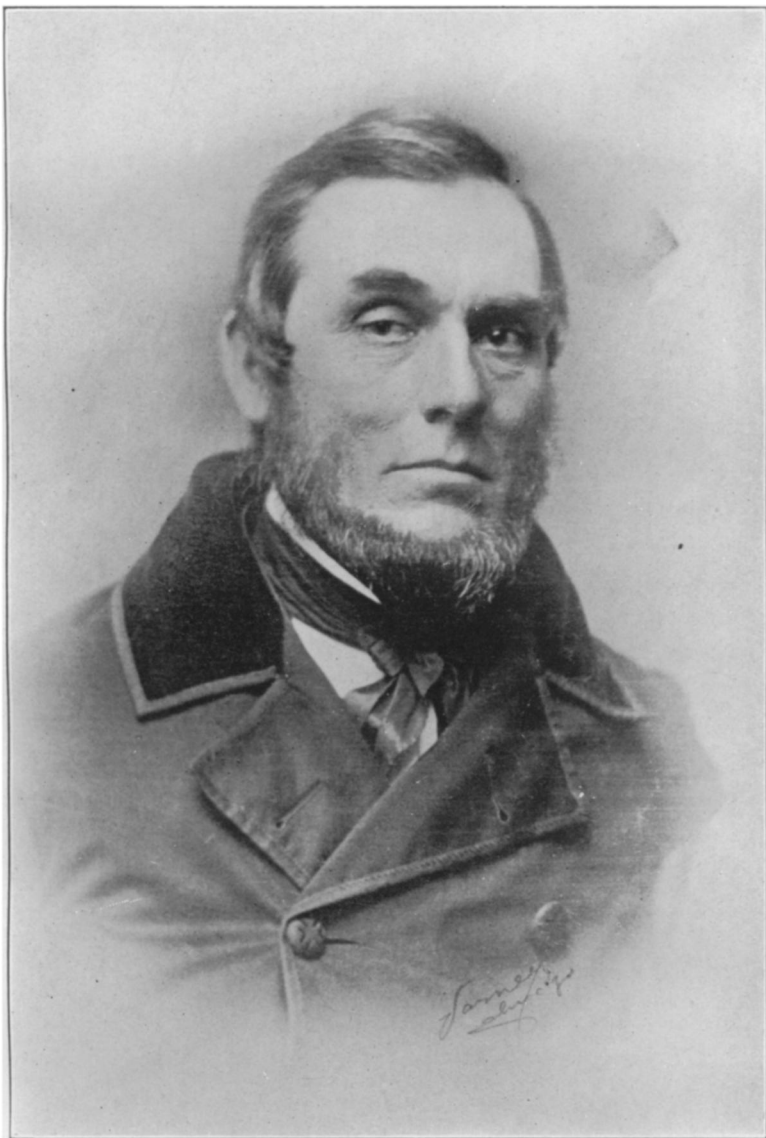
and Crane came to Beloit and built a shanty and occupied it. That spring a Major Johnson from Newburg, Vermont, and John Doolittle from Holley, Lower Canada, had reached Beloit and purchased 2/12ths of Blodgett's claims and lived in the Thibault shanty. Charles Goodhue from Sherbrooke, Lower Canada, and his brother-in-law, Tyler H. Moore, had purchased 3/12ths before and had begun the race and a saw mill on Turtle Creek when I reached the place. The interests were as follows then: Blodgett and sons 3/12ths, New England Company (so-called) 4/12ths, Goodhue and Moore 3/12ths, Johnson & Doolittle 2/12ths. I found there Blodgett and sons, Johnson & Doolittle, Cyrus Eames, Bicknell & Crane. The lower bench of Beloit or between the bluff and river was still covered by heavy timber and underbrush, but little having been removed. The owners had broken some acres on the bottoms and were breaking 160 acres where Slaymaker now resides and 100 acres on the high ground south of him. On Monday after my arrival I purchased of Goodhue and Moore one-fourth of their interest for \$400 and I paid for my share of the ploughing which was to be cultivated in common until a division of claims was made. I did not expect to locate there but bought on speculation.

On Tuesday, the seventeenth, I embarked in our canoe with Mr. Goodhue and son George, Mr. Frink, and Mr. Eames for Rockford, leaving Mr. Blood there. We remained at Rockford over night at the log hotel of Mr. Miller. There were several families there. Mr. Goodhue's son Charles met us there with his team and took us to Belvedere where he had a little store and where half a dozen families had settled. It was called Squaw Prairie and a Mr. Doty kept a hotel or tavern. We left our canoe to the citizens of Rockford. After a night's rest at Belvedere, Frink, Eames, and I started on foot for Chicago, stopping the first night at Spencer's Grove. The next day I was quite sick and reached Tyler & Raustead's house, four miles west of Elgin, about six P. M., and

was so sick that I felt that I could go no farther and proposed to stay over night, but they would not keep me, fearing that I should be too sick to leave in the morning. They reluctantly gave me a cup of tea and I moved on, being virtually dragged by the arms the four miles by Messrs. Frink and Doolittle.

Here let me correct a mistake in dates and facts. Cyrus Eames was not at Beloit at this time, and it was not Eames who left Beloit in the boat with us, but John Doolittle, who returned to Canada with Mr. Goodhue at this time. We reached Elgin after dark, where I learned that I had an aunt and her husband and three children living four miles above Elgin on Fox River, and in the morning I parted with Frink, who started for Ottawa, and I hired Mr. Kimball, the landlord, to take me in a wagon to my Aunt Tyler's, I being yet a sick man. Elgin had about ten families. I found my aunt and husband with three sons on a farm of 400 acres which George Tyler had squatted upon in 1835 and before the government survey. Aunt Tyler was the youngest sister of my mother, and married Noah Tyler of Claremont, New Hampshire, about 1803 and by him had eight children, four sons and four daughters. The family became Catholics and the four daughters became abbesses or superiors. The oldest son, George, went in early life to Georgia and emigrated from the South to this state and sent for his father, mother, and two brothers, who came to him. He married here at the age of fifty and is now a resident of Texas. The second son, William, died Catholic bishop of Rhode Island and Connecticut, in 1854, I think. The third son died at Dundee and the youngest is living at Elgin and has a large family of nine children. His name is Calvin. He was educated for the Catholic priesthood. One daughter, Sallie, is living in Detroit at the head of a Catholic nunnery.

My good aunt nursed me well and in three days I was quite well and was sent for by Mr. Goodhue to meet him at Elgin, which I did and he took me to Chicago with his team.



**LUCIUS GEORGE FISHER**

From a daguerreotype in the possession of the Fisher family

For miles before we reached Chicago the prairie was on an average one foot under water. I remained but a day or two in Chicago, stopping at the Tremont House. I took an old steamer back to Milwaukee. I boarded at the Leland House on the west side until September, when I started again for Beloit by way of Watertown and was accompanied by a young man by the name of Sanborn, who was or had been a medical student but had come west to seek his fortune. (He afterwards returned to New England and finished his studies and became very eminent in his profession in Keene, New Hampshire.) We borrowed a horse or pony of Colonel Parks, receiver of the land office, and rode and tied to Watertown, and there we spanseled the pony and turned him out to grass. The next day the Indians had stolen him and he was found some weeks after at Green Bay. We stopped with a Mr. Johnson, the first settler there and then the only family there except one in Goodhue's camp.<sup>13</sup> They gave us a bed separated from the bed of Mrs. Johnson and her daughter by a blanket hung between us. Mr. Johnson slept on the floor. The house was about 12 x 12 feet, in one room. We had for food salt pork, potatoes, and blackberries, and good appetites.

We remained one week and labored diligently with adz and axe in cutting down a basswood tree and fashioning a canoe from it, and at the end of a week we hired Mr. Johnson's yoke of oxen and drew the canoe about a mile to the river. Neither of us were acquainted with the use of tools, and the canoe was not artistic. We launched it, and on entering it the first time it shot from under me and left me in the river. But we soon got the hang of it and we set sail. On

<sup>13</sup> This was Timothy Johnson, a native of Middletown, Conn., who came to Wisconsin in 1835. He stopped at Racine for a few months, going from there to Wisconsin City (now Janesville) at the beginning of 1836. Not satisfied here, however, he soon went up Rock River to a point about two miles below the site of Jefferson, where he built a log house and cleared a garden plot. Further prospecting soon led to the discovery of "Johnson's Rapids" (modern Watertown), where he staked out a claim of 1,000 acres in the spring of 1836, bringing his family to the place in December following. He had thus been settled here about a year at the time of Fisher's first visit.

entering Lake Koshkonong we found the wild rice so high and thick that we could not find a way out of it, and we returned to an Indian encampment on the river and hired two Indian boys to go before us and pilot us through the rice (about half a mile) to clear water. We reached the outlet about dark and it was then by the river about twenty miles to Janesville, and we knew there was a log hut with a man and wife in it somewhere before reaching Janesville.

We pulled on in a bright moonlight and reached the shanty about midnight, very tired and hungry. On landing we went to the house and found an opening with a quilt for a door, which I pushed aside and spoke to a woman whom I discovered in a bed with her head within a foot of the door. She answered with a scream and the husband enquired, "Who is there?" I replied, "A friend," and made known our wants. He arose and struck a light and I found we were in a log room about 12 x 8 feet with no windows, door, or fireplace, the fire for cooking being made against the logs at one end and a hole in the roof for the escape of the smoke. The bedstead was made of two upright sticks with sticks, one end entering holes bored in the logs, the other entering holes in the standing pieces and slats on these supports. There were two berths of this kind, one over the other. We were given the upper one and slept until the party under us had breakfast ready. The man had been to the river and caught a fine catfish for breakfast and we had appetites that gave our food a fine relish. From there we went to Beloit in one day without accident. This was in September. Mr. Sanborn remained with me several days. He boarded with Mr. Blodgett in his log house, sleeping on the floor. Mr. Johnson, Alfred Field, and some others lived in the Thibault hut and the Bicknell family in a log hut near the paper mill or present dam, on the east side of the river. I remained about four weeks.

While there, a meeting of the settlers was called at the Beloit House, which was at that time enclosed and partly finished, to give a better name to the place. Major Johnson, Deacon Hobart, and myself were appointed a committee to report one and we proposed several and finally agreed to place the alphabet in a hat and see if we could not get a combination of letters that would give us a name that would be a new one. While proposing this, Mr. Johnson undertook to sound a French word for handsome ground and in trying he spoke "Bollotte," and I said after him "Beloit," like Detroit in sound and pretty and original I think. All sounded it and liked it and we reported it to the twenty or thirty who had sent us out and it was unanimously adopted; and it has ever since been Beloit and not New Albany.

While at Beloit Major Johnson and Cyrus Eames took the canoe that Sanborn and I made and floated down to Burlington where the first territorial legislature for the Wisconsin Territory was in session. The present states of Iowa and Wisconsin were called Wisconsin Territory then. At that session they obtained a charter for a female seminary in Beloit, it being the first charter for an institution of learning that was granted in the Territory.<sup>14</sup> While at Beloit in September, a Professor Whitney of Belvidere preached the first sermon in the Beloit House that was preached in the county of Rock. I remained into October and then returned to Milwaukee by the way of Watertown on horseback, riding one of George Goodhue's horses in company with him and remaining over night in his shanty at Watertown. I remained in Milwaukee until February, 1838, having sprained my ankle in January, which confined me to crutches for three months.

<sup>14</sup>The charter was granted in 1837 for the establishment of a seminary "for young persons of either sex." The school was not started, according to Horace White, until 1843 or 1844, when classes were held in the basement of the new Congregational church. Classes for girls were maintained separately in the "Female Seminary."

My father and sisters, Jane and Amanda, reached Fox River in December, where my sisters remained with my Aunt Tyler until March. They left Vermont in October and came by land with a three-horse team. My father came on to Beloit, and learning there that I was confined in Milwaukee by lameness, he started for me with his team, expecting to find his goods shipped by water from Burlington, Vermont, but found that the vessel and goods had been sent near Mackinaw and that a friend of mine had started with me in a jumper for Beloit, where we met after three days. We rented one-half of the log house which Blodgett had just left to occupy a new frame house. We went to Dundee for my sisters in March and settled in our home with but little furniture. My father had brought with him two beds and bedding and clothing. Dr. White, father of Horace White of New York, occupied the other half of the house with his family. I met him in April and we soon became fast friends. He was a good physician and a man of great business capacity, one who had great command of language and would say more in the fewest words than any man that I have ever known. He was a man of sound judgment. He was a very [word illegible] and reserved man, making but few confidants. We were more intimate than brothers usually are. We had no secrets that were withheld by either from the other. He died in December, 1843, and I was left very sad.

In the summer of 1838 I bought four yoke of oxen and broke prairie for the crop of 1839 after seeding the 20 acres which was my share of the 320 acres, which was ploughed in two fields and paid for and owned in common by the colonists. My father and I harrowed in wheat and oats in March. Bread and meat were very scarce and dear, and some days we had nothing but suckers caught out of Turtle Creek. But most of the time we had meat and as soon as the vegetables grew we lived very well having plenty of hog product and bread. Our fall crop of wheat was good.

In the fall of 1838 I went to Milwaukee and arranged with a merchant for stoves, boots, and shoes to sell on commission, and with one team I drove them to Beloit and sold them at a good profit to the settlers who were coming in almost every day. In the winter of 1838-9 we lived in a part of Mr. Blodgett's new frame house. In the summer of 1838 I made a claim of 160 acres on Rock River, two miles above Fort Atkinson, which was covered with timber, much of it basswood. In the winter of 1838-9 I hired four men to cut logs and rafted them in the spring to Beloit and had them cut on shares by Messrs. Goodhue and Moore. From the sales of this lumber I paid my men and from a part of it I built a comfortable house for my family. My sisters, Emeline and Rosetta, had been left behind, one in Montreal and Rosetta with an uncle in Burke, Vermont, under the care of a physician, having a sprained foot that she did not step upon for three years and which is not well yet. They came west in the fall of 1838, so in the new house we all gathered and were very happy.

In March, 1839, the first land sale took place in Milwaukee, and I was chosen bidder for all claimants in the south half of Rock County east of Rock River, the lands on the west side having been brought into market before at a land sale in Milwaukee. The claimants all secured their lands, they standing by me and permitting no one to bid but me on their lands, and I got all for them at the upset price of \$1.25 per acre. Here I met the cousin and agent of Gen. Philip Kearney, and arranged with him to buy lands for the general and take the agency of the lands purchased. I made entries for him at Milwaukee and afterwards at Dixon land sale and subsequently entered some thousands of acres with Mexican soldiers' land warrants on shares and managed his estate in the west for some years, and in 1856 I bought his remaining lands at \$60,000 and closed my account with him. He visited me once in Beloit.

The first session of the territorial legislature was held at Belmont, Lafayette County, the second at Burlington, Iowa, and the third in Madison in November, 1838, after Iowa was organized as a separate territory. I attended that and succeeding sessions for several years as a lobby member. In 1839 I was appointed sheriff of Rock County by Governor Dodge and held the office six years, in one of which I took the census of the county and as sheriff collected the taxes of the county. I had my appointment from Governor Dodge two years, from Governor Doty three years, and the last year from the people, the office having been made elective. The statutes would not permit me to hold it again until after two years. My business was such that I could not afford to hold it longer, and I accepted the last election because the county was democratic and I was the only Whig that could defeat the nominee of that party. On the night of the election I went to Janesville to get the returns and found all but four towns reported and a tie. The next town came in a tie, also the next, and one more to be heard from and that a democratic one I knew. When I got the returns from that I had seven majority, and a great shout went up from my friends.

At the legislative session of 1840 I was appointed a commissioner to lay out three territorial roads—one from Beloit to Southport (now Kenosha), one from Beloit to Madison, the other to Milwaukee. Two others were appointed with me on each road. I spent much time on them and they are the roads of today with some slight changes. At the next session I was commissioned to lay a road from Beloit to Watertown.

In 1839 I met for the first time Miss Caroline Field, the daughter of Deacon Peter Field, who was at Beloit to visit her parents. We soon became engaged to marry and after a courtship of three years we married in June, 1842. I had built a house, into which we moved on the day of our marriage, where I lived until 1866 and where all my children were born.

In 1842 Horace White, Harvey Bundy, and myself formed a partnership in a general goods business and commenced building the stone flour mill on the Turtle Creek. We bought a stock of goods for another store, called the Mill Store. In December, 1843, Doctor White died and I was left with all the business and also his family to care for and his estate to settle, and my partner, Harvey Bundy, a worthless business man. All the wise ones prophesied that we should fail and White's estate was or would be used up. We owed a large amount and the mill was about half finished. I felt that I might lose all—for I had not much to lose really beyond the land that I first purchased and a few hundred dollars earned. I settled the estate and saved it without loss, and kept the family together until Mrs. White married Deacon Samuel Hinman. Horace White of the *Tribune* once, and now the treasurer of the Oregon Steam Navigation Company, was the son of Doctor White.<sup>15</sup>

In 1852 a railroad charter had been obtained for building a road from Racine to Beloit. Also, one from Southport to Beloit. The incorporators of each road came to me to assist them to build, and I chose the road to Racine and made enemies of the incorporators of the Southport road for the time being. It was through my influence that it was built. Fisher, Keep & Tolcott contracted to build it from Fox River to Freeport, and built it from Fox River or Burlington to Durand, when the financial crisis of 1867 failed the company and the work was suspended one year. I was appointed a receiver by the court and ran it a short time when it was restored to the directors and I became a director and the company built it to the Mississippi and sold it out to the bondholders.

<sup>15</sup> Horace White, widely known as a publicist, and writer on financial themes, was brought to Beloit by his parents as a child of three years in 1837. He was graduated at Beloit College in 1853, and in 1854 became city editor of the *Chicago Evening Journal*. From 1864 to 1874 he was editor and part owner of the *Chicago Tribune*. In 1883 he bought a part interest in the *New York Evening Post* and thereafter for twenty years was one of its managers, and for the last few years of the period its editor-in-chief.

Before this, in 1848 the Chicago and Galena Railroad had been built to Elgin and the funds of the company were exhausted, and William B. Ogden and other directors came to Beloit and offered to build a branch of their road from Rockford to Beloit, when their road reached Rockford, if the people of Beloit would subscribe \$75,000 to the main line. I was selected by our citizens to take the subscription and in one week I got it—part of it without conditions, and part with my guarantee that if they would subscribe and pay five per cent, that I would guarantee the stock to be par when the second installment was called for. The installments were to be five per cent each month. Mr. Keep, Mr. Cheney, and myself took \$30,000 and I took \$15,000 for General Kearney. When the second installment was called for I had to take several thousand more that was given me on my agreement to take it if not at par. Before the third installment was due the stock was at five per cent premium and I sold most of it. The company built the road from Belvidere instead of Rockford, which gave us a shorter line. The next year the Beloit and Madison Railroad was begun, and I was elected a director in that and remained on the board until it was sold to the Chicago & Galena Company, which company soon after sold out to the Northwestern Railroad Company. I was a contractor on the Chicago & Northwestern Air Line between the Rock and Mississippi rivers. In 1856 I was one of the contractors for building the railroad from Clinton, Iowa, to Council Bluffs. The contract was for grading, ironing, and ballasting the road and amounted to about \$13,000,000. The pay was a land grant of every other section ten miles in width, some cash, and some bonds and some stock. When we had expended about \$400,000 in grading, the company failed in 1857. We got the first 100 sections of land and the franchise of the road, which we sold to Mr. Blair of New Jersey and got even with the company. We took the land grant and built the road some years after; Morris K.

Jessup, Dean Richmond, Charles Reed of Erie, and Messrs. Morris & Courtright of New York were partners, also H. S. Durand and Wm. Allen of Racine. I also had a partnership with the last two and Judge Green of Providence, Rhode Island, by which the latter gentleman was to furnish \$100,000 cash to be used by Durand, Allan, and myself in the purchase of lands and town sites in Iowa on the line of the road, the profits to be divided equally between Durand, Allan, and myself, party of the first part, and Greene and his associates, party of the second part. The crisis of 1857 ended that project. In 1852 I prevailed upon a party in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to open a bank in Beloit. In 1854 John M. Keep, A. L. Field, and myself bought the bank stock and elected Keep president and Field cashier. In 1856 I was elected president and Mr. Keep sold his stock. In the crisis of 1857 the bank failed and was closed and its charter sold to Davis & Martin. In 1856 I was elected to the legislature and served in 1856-7 and declined a reelection, as at the time of election the next year, I had more business irons in the fire than I could attend to.

When the charter of the city of Beloit was obtained, I was elected an alderman from the second ward and served six years, and was two years county supervisor. I was a director in a gas company, also in a car company that went no further than organizing.

I was a partner of W. T. Goodhue in the purchase and ownership of considerable real estate. With Goodhue and R. H. Mills in the purchase and sale of real estate; also, with R. H. Mills in the purchase and sale of a large amount of real estate. In the settlement with Mr. Mills, he owed me over \$15,000 which he could not pay, so I gave it to him. Mr. H. Cheney owed me as much more when he left for Colorado, where he died. Messrs. Mills, Brooks, and I purchased and sold much real estate. I was elected a trustee of Beloit College at its organization and have been to date, also one of

the Executive Committee while I lived in Beloit, and gave much of the site or grounds. I have been a deacon in the Congregational church about thirty years. In 1861 I was appointed by President Lincoln postmaster at Beloit. He had been my attorney in defending the title to Beloit, which I did at my own expense mostly and won the suit, and saved the citizens from a heavy blackmail.

The president offered me any office that I thought myself competent to fill, through my friend, David Davis. I took the Beloit post office, as I could not leave my business interests in Beloit. At the end of four years I was commissioned again by Lincoln and was afterwards removed by Johnson for refusing to support his measures. In 1862 I was appointed by Secretary Chase to take subscriptions to the first or gold bonds issued to carry on the war, and was one of two appointed for Wisconsin and received subscriptions.